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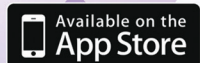
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**WANDA WISDOM'S  
GUIDE TO LAVENDER'S  
SUMMER OF PRIDE**



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From May 19 Until June 1, 2011



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Even more **tragic** is what will likely occur through the use of smokeless tobacco. Smokers will use smokeless tobacco when they can't smoke to meet their need for **nicotine**, thus **maintaining** their cigarette **addiction** and reducing the likelihood of quitting.



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# LAVENDER®

MAY 19-JUNE 1, 2011 | **ISSUE 417** | LAVENDER'S SUMMER OF PRIDE PREVIEW

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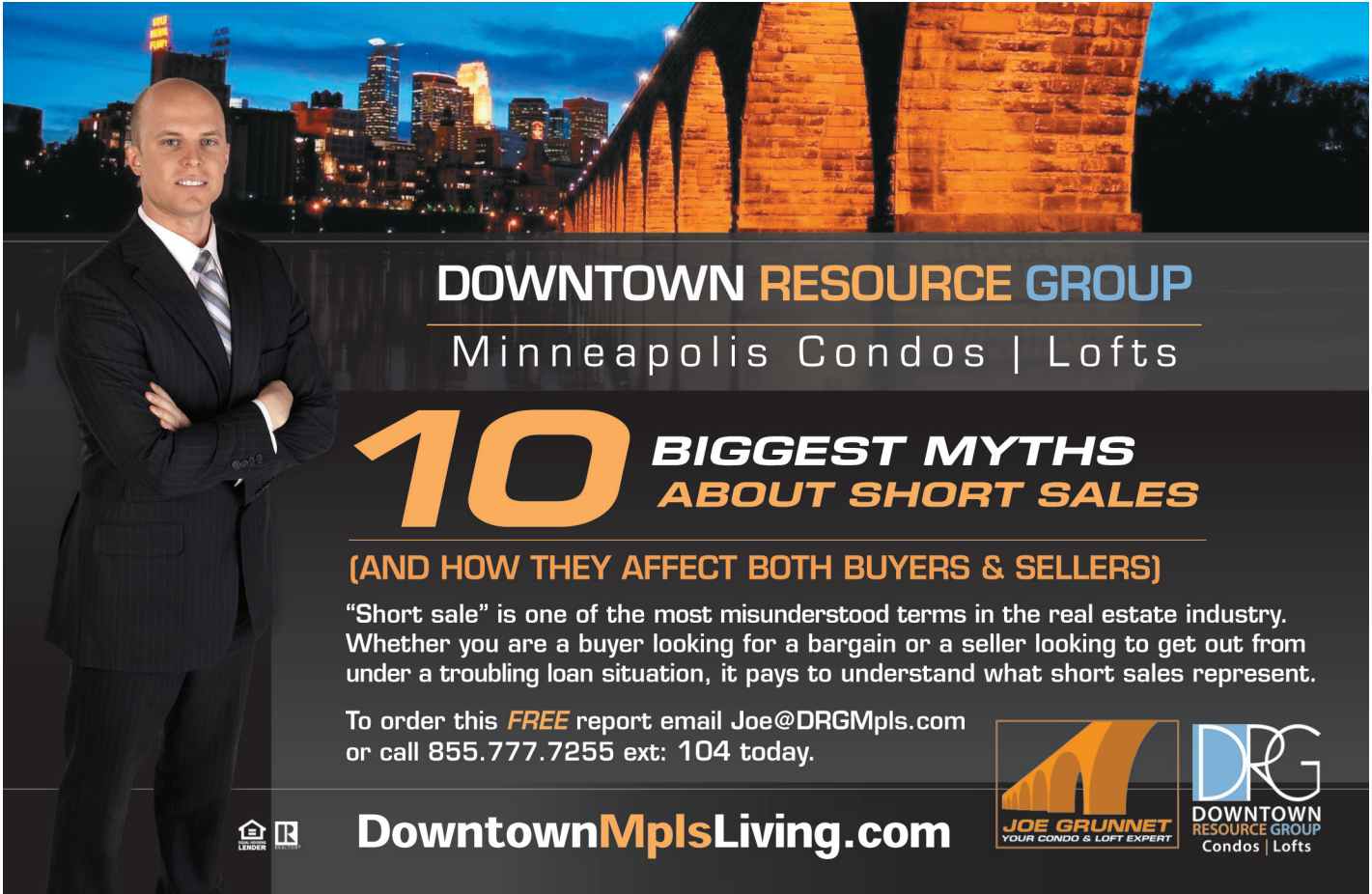
#### Top Headlines

- ✓ Northern Ireland Man Acquitted Over Reaction to Gay Bar Butt Grab
- ✓ Bill Clinton Backs NY Gay Marriage Bill
- ✓ Catholic Charities Threatens to Block Illinois Gay Adoptions
- ✓ Fox Houston Under Fire for Asking 'Is Glee Too Gay?'



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## Hope—Not Ho-Hum

AS ANOTHER PRIDE celebration draws near, one contemplates the consumerism, the crowds, and the assimilation supplanting more rough and rowdy Prides of the past. More communities are celebrating, more GLBT folks and allies, and just plain citizenry, are joining in.

The Stonewall Uprising's 42nd anniversary is just around the corner (June 28), and while the name has become a catchphrase, the importance of that pivotal event remains. Gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transvestites, and transgender people finally said, "No!" to the cycle of random police roundups, beatings, harassment, and imprisonment.

That crowds now can parade by the thousands through Downtown Minneapolis, can congregate peacefully in Loring Park—however huckster-ridden and politico-laden they may be—is a testament to the dramatic changes initiated that night.

Recently, former President Bill Clinton and his daughter, Chelsea, stepped forward to urge New York lawmakers to legalize same-sex marriage. Chelsea herself is getting trained on the phone system to work with the campaign run by New Yorkers United for Marriage, a coalition of New York gay-rights organizations.

Whether or not one sees marriage as the main focus of gay rights or political activities generally, the rite of and right to marriage is a signal one in societies worldwide, marking the participants' legal and social standing within the state, village, or tribe. To be denied this status, whether one wants to accept it or not, is to be denied a significant part of what defines a qualified member of a given group.

While the Clintons lend their collective name to New York's campaign, Minnesota Republicans (backed by religious groups) are introducing bills to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot in 2012 banning same-sex marriage.

Speaking against this effort was Representative Steve Simon (DFL), asking, "How many more people does God have to create before we ask ourselves whether or not God actually wants them around? How many gay people does God have to create before we ask ourselves whether the living of their lives the way they wish as long as they don't harm others is a Godly, holy, happy, glorious thing?"

Let us, in these coming months, determine to exert as much time, energy, and resources as the Republicans will be putting into stepping backward into a proud step forward. □



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**Jonathan: Tell us all about the CelebriDiva(s) whose influence has(have) changed your life!**

I coined the term CelebriDiva to encompass all those fabulous women who have helped to shape the world of entertainment, and inspire me and countless others with their unique brand of fabulousity. My favorite CelebriDivas are the women who make me laugh, don't take life too seriously, and continue to push themselves beyond their comfort zone. Chief among them are Lucille Ball, Rosalind Russell, Carol Burnett, and Dame Edna.

**Jimmy: Who was your fave on *Designing Women*?**

All of them. Really depends on my mood. If you were holding a gun to my head, I'd go with Suzanne. Her baton-twirling gets me every time.

**Jessica: Can you wear white before Memorial Day?**

Ask your mother.

**Phil: What musical-theater role would you stiletto someone to death to play?**

Rose from *Gypsy*. You will see me in this role one day. Guaranteed. "*Wanda's got the stuff. Wanda's gotta move. Wanda's gotta go. Wanda? Wanda?*"

**Augustine: What's your favorite TV show?**

We could be here all day. Where do I even begin? Again, if you were holding a gun to my head, and asked what shows I absolutely could not live without, I imagine the list would look something like this: *Golden Girls*, *Doctor Who*, *Are You Being Served*, *Upstairs, Downstairs*, *Designing Women*, and *Good Times*. As you can tell, my television tastes live somewhere between 1972 and 1989. □

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# GLIMPSES

by George Holdgrafer



1

## Burgess Is New Executive Director of Trans Youth Support Network

**In mid-April**, Trans Youth Support Network (TYSN) hired Katie Burgess as its new Executor Director. She served as Transitional Director since October 2010. She will lead with TYSN members to ensure that trans and gender-nonconforming youth, especially young trans women of color, continue to move to the center of the organization's vision and mission.

Katie Burgess. Photo Courtesy of Trans Youth Support Network



2

## Out in the Backyard Holds Inaugural Meeting at Global Market

**Out in the Backyard's** inaugural meeting took place on April 21 at Global Market in Minneapolis. The organization's goal is to connect local LGBTQ people to each other and resources in the community. It's part of a larger group, Backyard Initiative, supported by Allina and the Cultural Wellness Center.

Out in the Backyard Cofounders Jen Dolan (left) and Mili Dutta. Photo by Sophia Hantzes



3

## Ann Bancroft Foundation Dream Maker Awards Honor Four

**On April 28**, Ann Bancroft Foundation hosted the 14th-annual Dream Maker Awards at the Hyatt Hotel in Downtown Minneapolis. Award winners were Shawnnise Watkins, Susan McCormick Hadley, Pam Borton, and Women's Advocates. The awards are named for Ann Bancroft, the first and only woman to reach both the North and South Poles.

Ann Bancroft (left) and Pam Borton. Photo by Sophia Hantzes



4

## 42nd Avenue Station Receives Award at BECAUSE

**The Bisexual** Empowerment Conference: A Uniting, Supportive Experience (BECAUSE), which took place April 30 at Hamline University in St. Paul, included speakers and workshops. 42nd Avenue Station in Minneapolis received the Bisexual Organizing Project Business Community Recognition Award for its outreach to and support of the Twin Cities bisexual community.

(From left) BECAUSE Organizer Teri Kline; 42nd Avenue Station Co-owners Robert Rice and Geno Gelhaye; Bisexual Organizing Project Chairperson Lauren Beach. Photo by Sophia Hantzes



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# READY, SET... GO, GIRL!

## WANDA WISDOM'S GUIDE TO LAVENDER'S SUMMER OF PRIDE

From June 2 to September 15, don't miss the five sizzling events of the seventh-annual popular series.

### KICKOFF PARTY

June 2 • 5:30-10 PM

Nicollet Island Pavilion  
40 Power St., Nicollet Island, Mpls.

Lavender's Summer of Pride Kickoff Party on June 2 gets things off to a warm and rockin' start. It's presented by Ameriprise Financial, Medica, and Rokk Volka, along with support from Barefoot Wine, Fleet Naturals, and RSVP Vacations.

The event takes place at Nicollet Island Pavilion in Minneapolis, a venue sporting not only a gorgeous panorama, but also—most importantly—plenty of parking.

Amy Armstrong and Freddy Allen, noted Chicago-based entertainers for 15 years, will liven the festivities.

Lavender's own Bradley Traynor, Podcaster of BigGayNews.com —AKA Wanda Wisdom—and Jason Matheson, of FOX 9 and *myTalk* 107.1, again will cohost the evening.

Traynor comments, "June marks the beginning of another Pride season, and one of my favorite times of the year. I've always felt Pride was like gay Christmas, minus all the snow.

This year, with the weather the way it's been, who knows?—we might have to break out our rainbow long underwear again. Whatever the weather, *Lavender* is about to kick off another summer's worth of Pride festivities.

"The annual Summer of Pride Kickoff is just around the corner, and I'm very honored to be cohosting with my good friend, Jason Matheson, once again. One of the signature treats of my year is the chance to get up onstage with Jason, and celebrate the start of another wonderful





Summer of Pride. When the two of us get together, you can always count on ample laughter.

"We'll also be honoring community heroes, and showcasing all the fun that's in store for the season. If Pride really is like gay Christmas, then I guess Lavender's Summer of Pride Kick-off would be like a trip to see gay Santa Claus. Perhaps this year, Jason and I will wear long beards, and let people get their pictures taken on our laps."

Along with the music, food, and flowing wine, a high point will be the celebration of and congratulations to the 2011 Lavender PRIDE Award Honorees: John E. Larsen; Lorraine Teel; Gary Remafedi, MD, MPH; Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League; Quatrefoil Library; and General Mills and its Betty's Family GLBT Network.

All are invited to party in party in the Ameriprise Lounge, with complimentary hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, gift bags, and the first hot-off-the-press copies of the 2011 *Lavender* Pride Edition.

To keep the party going, register to win great prizes, including a Caribbean cruise for two from RSVP Vacations.

#### OTHER SUMMER OF PRIDE EVENTS

Fantastic as the Kickoff Party may be, it's only the tip of the summer iceberg, the leading edge of the fabulous Summer of Pride. It has been a long, long winter, so it's finally time to kick out and kick off the blahs of the cold and dark, and live it up with a series of events.

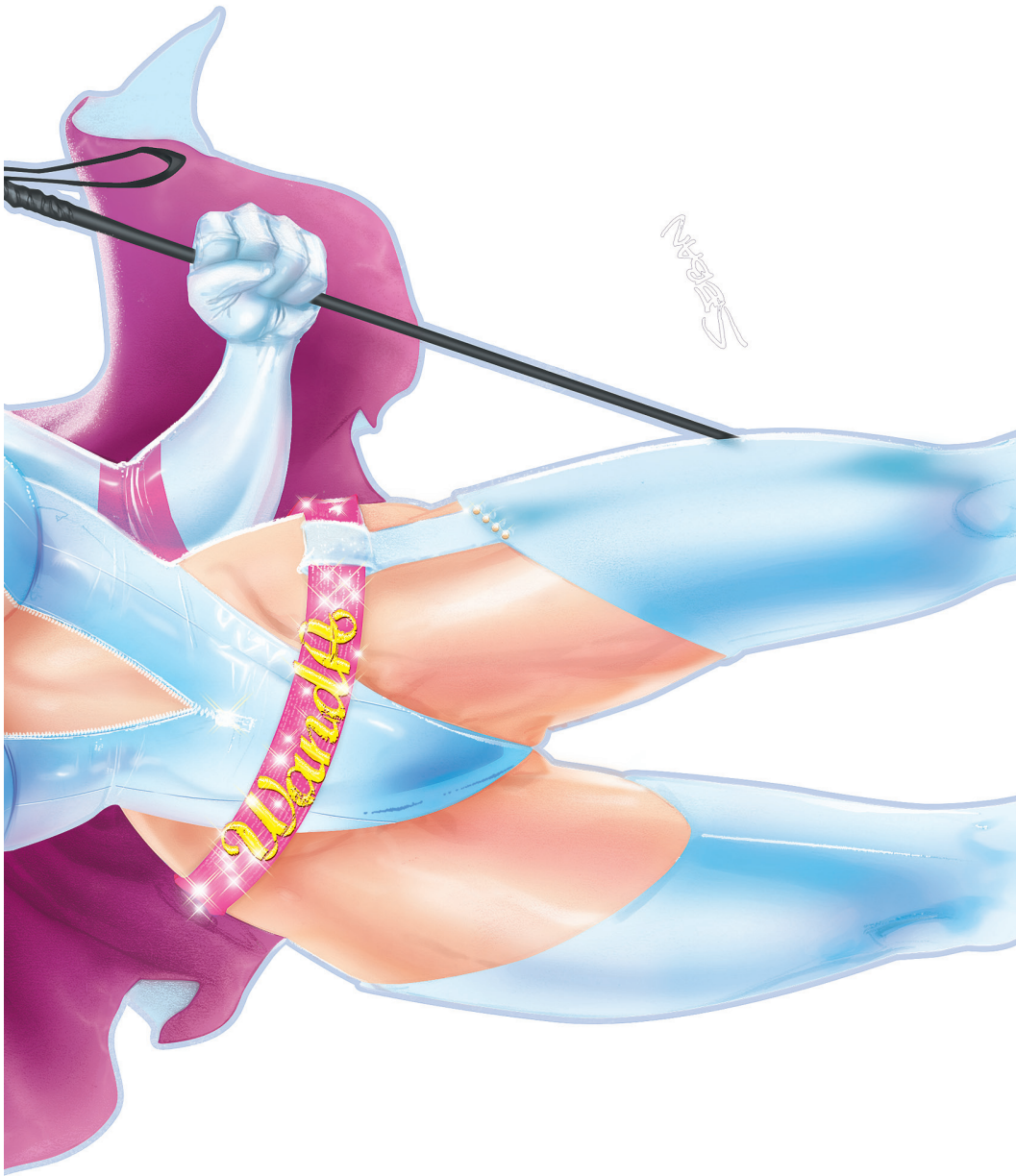


Photo Courtesy of Miniahoe Catering and Events

#### *Kickoff Party*



Photo Courtesy of Bitch Flowers

#### *Bitch-N-Brunch*

## LAVENDER'S **OUT** AT THE MOVIES



## PRIDE THURSDAY

June 23 • 5:30-8 PM

Thom Pham's Wondrous Azian Kitchen  
533 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.

You love Lavender's First Thursdays, so join us for a special Lavender Pride Thursday. Enjoy happy hour drink specials and complimentary hors d'oeuvres, plus register for great prizes. What a great way to start off a long weekend of Pride festivities in the Twin Cities!

## BITCH-N-BRUNCH

June 26 • 9 AM-2 PM

Rooftop Lounge,  
Seven Steakhouse  
700 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.

Join locally renowned drag personality Bitch Flowers for the one-and-only Bitch-N-Brunch on the rooftop lounge of Seven Steakhouse. An overflow crowd will watch the Pride Parade from the most spectacular, centrally located vantage point. Superb entertainment includes Harley Wood, Far From

Falling, and DJ Shiek. Attendees will enjoy a first-class brunch, complimentary gift bags, and prize drawings. A portion of the ticket proceeds benefits The Aliveness Project.

## OUT IN THE STANDS

Preparty

July 17 • 4-7 PM

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Held at the Minnesota Twins home, Target Field, Out in the Stands has become a rite of summer. Watch the Twins play the Detroit Tigers in a special section reserved entirely for Out in the Stands. As a result of the event's popularity, the number of tickets

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Postparty

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After the game, fans can show their tickets for specials.

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Lavender's Out at the Movies is a fun-filled community movie night. Prior to the film, attendees will enjoy their favorite beverage, complimentary hors d'oeuvres, and drawings for prizes. Tickets stubs are good for specials at area restaurants and bars. The movie to be screened will be announced later. □

Celebrate Pride Month  
with Twin Cities Pride!



### JUNE 2011

- 6.10: Grand Marshal Reception and Art Show Awards
- 6.17: Pride Night with the MN Lynx
- 6.18: Pride Boat Cruise, Stillwater
- 6.19: Pride Family Picnic, Como Pavilion
- 6.25-26: Pride Festival, Loring Park
- 6.25: Pride in Concert with Boogie Wonderland, God-des & She, Kaci Battaglia and Debbie Gibson
- 6.26: Pride Rainbow Run 5K before the Parade (new this year!)
- June 26: Ashley Rukes GLBTQA Pride Parade, Hennepin Avenue

See your favorite local artists free at Pride - Over 40 Minnesota-based acts are performing on 4 stages! Twin Cities Pride is a fiscal year 2011 recipient of a Minnesota Festival Support grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is funded, in part, by the arts and cultural heritage fund as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the Legacy Amendment vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

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# CONTAIN YOURSELF



Photos Courtesy of Tangletown Gardens

NO OTHER TYPE of gardening offers instant gratification in the way a container garden can. It is fun to help guests put winning combinations together at Tangletown Gardens—sending them home with a sure recipe for success, and a guarantee to be the envy of their neighbors.

In a matter of a few hours, one can create a complete “garden,” with the boundaries being the vessel in which it is contained. That time includes travel to and from the garden center, planting, and placement, with time left over for admiration of a job well done.

My container style is a bit on the bold side, with much emphasis placed on foliage, form, and texture. Flowers become some-

how secondary in choosing plants for my combinations.

As a horticulturist, I seek out the unusual. Interesting combinations begin with unusual plants. As a designer, it is my job to accentuate the beauty of these plants by the companions and containers I choose for them, and their placement in the landscape.

A well-designed container garden is a composition of art, similar to sculpture, where all components work together, while honoring the principles and elements of design.

The plants are often a catalyst for putting together an incredible combination. With so many choices available at our fingertips, I cannot help being drawn in by their addictive qualities.

I will often be drawn to a particular plant, and choose companion plants that are complementary in form, texture, and color. The plants will tell me what they want to be partnered with—opposites attract—smooth textures next to bold, upright forms with trailing, cool colors with hot, etc.

Container choices are also important in this style. For me, the container is the vessel that allows a container garden to exist, and much attention should be placed on how it works within its surroundings.

I tend to choose containers that complement the architecture of the home, and yet still are an expression of the homeowner's personality. Whether contemporary or traditional, I prefer outdoor containers to be more clean-lined versus fussy, allowing the plants to be the stars.

Container combinations are often the focal points in my garden, making both their artistic and architectural roles very important. They are a concentrated version of creative energy—a reflection of my creative side and love of plants, while serving as a bridge between house and garden. □

*Scott Endres is co-owner of Tangletown Gardens at on 54th and Nicollet in South Minneapolis.*



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# Minnesota Senate Passes Constitutional Amendment

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**BAN ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE ADVANCES IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE TOWARD 2012 BALLOT.**

A PROPOSED AMENDMENT to the Minnesota Constitution that would define marriage as between one man and one woman, thereby prohibiting same-sex marriage, passed the Minnesota Senate on May 11, which brought it one step closer to appearing on the 2012 ballot.

Senator Warren Limmer (Republican-Maple Grove) introduced the bill April 27. If it passes the House of Representatives, it would allow the Minnesota electorate to determine whether a ban on gay marriage would be added to the state constitution.

"The proposed constitutional amendment asks voters to define marriage as solely between one man and one woman in Minnesota," Limmer said in a press release. "This issue constantly comes up during legislative sessions, and it's time for the people to decide."

State law already prohibits same-sex marriage, but a constitutional amendment would make the ban more difficult to change in the future.

Monica Meyer, Executive Director of Outfront Minnesota, said the amendment does not serve the public good.

"It is really disheartening that the Legislature is going down this path," Meyer said. "Using LGBT people and families as political fodder is really not taking the responsibility to look out for future generations."

According to Meyer, results of recent polls are promising, and show increased sup-



Photo by Sophia Hantzes

port for same-sex marriage nationwide. A poll by the Washington Post and ABC News, released March 18, found that 53 percent of Americans say it should be legal for gays and lesbians to marry.

Meyer asserted that supporters of equality need to oppose the amendment publicly, contact their legislators, and "do everything they can to stop it."

"I hope we can show that this amendment doesn't speak for our state," Meyer said. "We want to show that Minnesotans support fairness and equity for all people."

Denny Smith, Executive Director of the organization Winning Marriage Equality, and father of a gay son, said the amendment provides an opportunity for reasonable discussion across the state.

"It's going to bring [same-sex marriage] to the forefront, and people are going to talk about it," Smith explained. "I really am optimistic that the people of Minnesota will analyze it, and find that [same-sex marriage] is not going to hurt anybody. I think that the people of Minnesota are going to say enough is enough."

In Smith's words, "The rights of the minority should not be put to a vote of the majority. Let's embrace the fact that it is, and go out and tell our stories."

Same-sex marriage has been legalized by five states: Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

In March, President Barack Obama announced that the Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional. Passed in 1996, it prohibits marriage for same-sex couples. ■



Melissa Houghtaling

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#### First Openly Gay Justice Confirmed to Massachusetts High Court

▼ The *Boston Globe* reports that veteran appeals court judge Barbara Lenk, who is openly gay, won confirmation to a seat on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. She becomes the first openly gay judge to serve on the state's highest court. Lenk had the full support of the state's legal establishment.

#### Moscow Allows First Gay Pride Rally

Agence France-Presse reports that Moscow officials have authorized the city's first Gay Pride parade. GayRussia association head Nikolai Alexeyev told AFP, "After a five-year struggle, we have received permission from

city hall to organize a Gay Pride parade on May 28."

#### St. Paul City Staffer Under Review for Antigay E-mail

The *Pioneer Press* reports that Barb Benson, the executive assistant to St. Paul City Council Member Dave Thune, is under review after a derogatory e-mail she sent about a political opponent. In the e-mail, she referred to Bill Hosko as "the gay guy that always runs [against] Dave for City Council." Benson is now under review by the city's human resources personnel.

#### Eight Horses Dead in Possible Hate Crime

NBC reports that authorities in Ohio are investigating a barn fire on the property of a local gay man that left his eight

horses dead. Antigay graffiti was spray-painted all over the barn. The fire has been ruled an arson, and local authorities are looking at the possibility of a hate-crime investigation.

#### Clinton Backs New York Same-Sex Marriage Bill

Politico reports that former President Bill Clinton, who notoriously signed the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which banned same-sex marriage, has announced he is supporting a campaign to legalize gay marriage in New York.

#### Catholic Charities Threatens To Block Illinois Gay Adoptions

WBEZ reports that Catholic Charities, one of the largest adoption and foster-care provid-

ers in Illinois, has warned that it may drop those services if forced to accept gay and lesbian couples. The statement comes less than a month before new protections for gay and lesbian couples go into effect.

#### FOX Houston Under Fire for Asking: "Is Glee Too Gay?"

The *Houston Chronicle* reports that Houston's FOX TV affiliate KRIV has been criticized for airing a segment after the TV show *Glee* asking if it was "too gay." The six-minute segment featured a debate between an advocate and an opponent of equality for gays and lesbians.

#### Wheaton College Alumni Group Offers Support for GLBT Students

The *Chicago Tribune* reports that alumni from Wheaton College have formed an organization to support GLBT students on campus. Organizers said they sought to offer GLBT students a safe space on the Christian conservative campus.

#### Law Firm Hit from Both Sides Over Same-Sex Marriage Law

Reuters reports that King & Spalding, the DC area law firm that reversed its decision to participate in the legal defense of the federal Defense of Marriage Act after criticism from liberals, is now losing conservative clients. The NRA announced it would no longer use the firm as its outside counsel.



#### Murder of South African Lesbian Activist Condemned

→ Agence France-Presse reports that Human Rights Watch has condemned the murder of 24-year-old South African lesbian activist Noxolo Nogwaza in April as part of an "epidemic" of hate crimes against gays and lesbians. Nogwaza, a member of the Ekurhuleni Pride Organizing Committee, was stoned and stabbed to death on April 24. Police haven't made any arrests in the case, and told AFP they don't yet believe the murder is a hate crime. A 2008 study found, however, that 86 percent of black lesbians in South Africa's Western Cape province fear sexual assault or "corrective rape." □

# FILTERING OUT INEQUALITY

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# It's Just Plain Wrong

**SAME-SEX MARRIAGE.** Don't Ask Don't Tell. Blood donation. Whenever I am confronted with yet another reminder that, as a gay man in the United States, I am, in fact, not treated as an equal member of society by my own government, I want to turn the page, flip the channel, turn off the radio, and bury my head in the sand.

I want to run away in my mind to a magical place—that idyllic American Shangri-La as taught to me by my fifth-grade social studies teacher. You know, the one where everyone is created equal, and everyone has the same rights as everyone else, so long as they don't kill anyone or steal anyone's stuff.

The older and more sober I get, however, the harder it is to escape. Instead, I continue to listen, watch, and read, despite the flood of emotions that begins to swirl in the pit of my stomach—a feeling akin to a sucker punch that, I imagine, is afforded only to those who've had the singular pleasure of being legislated against.

Such was the feeling a number of weeks ago when I heard for the first time that, despite their campaign pledges to the contrary, Republicans at the State Legislature had decided to push for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. This time, with a majority and very little to stop them, the possibility of their success was greater than ever before. Crap.

Wait a minute. I thought we were done with the statewide antigay-marriage-amendment, witch-burning hysteria of the last decade? Apparently not.

No, Minnesota Republicans have been out of power for so long, their legislative wish list seems to have quite the backlog. I mean *backward* log. I half-expect next month they'll be announcing their opposition to the ERA.

To most of us, however, the announcement that the Legislature would actively pursue



banning gay and lesbian people from having legally recognized relationships came as a bit of a shock.

Do we really have to deal with this crap again? It's 2011! Legislating away people's civil rights is the luxury of a bygone era—one where people, you know, had jobs, a couple extra bucks in their pocket, and untold hours to sit around having opinions about things that have very little, if anything, to do with them.

Ask your average person on the street today if he thinks a same-sex marriage ban is a priority, and I'm pretty sure you'll get a resounding, "Um, no."

No. This time people are too busy. Too busy surviving. Trying to find and keep a job. They want their government to do its things, like filling potholes and plugging oil leaks. They want schools that can teach their kids how to grow up and solve all the problems we haven't been able to because we're too goddamned busy wasting everyone's time getting all riled up over a bunch of phony-baloney boogymen.

Yet, here we are. And why? Because Republicans need a reason to get people to

the polls in 2012. They know they can bait their base with a juicy piece of ideological red meat like same-sex marriage, and, voila!—instant turnout. As well, Democrats get another couple whacks at the big gay piñata for the campaign contributions they swear they'll need to stop the Republican attack.

Where exactly does that leave us? Broke, disheartened, and still second-class citizens. Even if the amendment is defeated, we still have a state law preventing us from getting married—and a constitutional precedent.

The only response I've seen from our community, thus far, doesn't leave me very hopeful either. Already, we're trotting out the same tired old predictable arguments to try to sway public opinion:

- "God loves gays/God created gays." He/She probably does/did, but good luck trying to prove that to people who also believe the Earth was created about 5,000 years ago.
- "It's bad for business." Outlawing prostitution and street drugs is also bad for the business of pimps and pushers, but I don't see the Chamber of Commerce taking up their cause anytime soon.

No, the only real argument we need to make with our fellow Minnesotans is mind-numbingly simple, and one they'll readily understand: It's just wrong. Yep, wrong. Not right. Wrong. As in: Writing my inequality into the constitution is just plain wrong. You can't do it. You won't do it.

Why? Because, gays and lesbians, like you, are Americans first. And as such, we are entitled to get what we deserve—what is ours: the same rights and privileges under the constitution that you enjoy. You can try to keep them from us, but if you do, know that this is America. We get what we want.

If we need to, we will fly in a couple of Blackhawk helicopters, drop in a Navy SEAL team, and take what is ours. It's not that hard. □



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# Cirque du Soleil Presents *Ovo* at Mall of America

Interview with Michelle Matlock



Photo Courtesy of Cirque du Soleil

Michelle Matlock, celebrated writer, clown, and actress, spoke with *Lavender* recently about performing in Cirque du Soleil's *Ovo* at Mall of America.

**Tell us about your character, Ladybug (Coccinelle).**

I love my costume! It's perfect for the character—bright, round, and colorful. Ladybug is the romantic of the show. She's very playful. She's looking for love. Ladybug starts out alone, but she's patient, and has faith she will find love. I think she represents hope.

**What's *Ovo*'s "plot"?**

A community of bugs wakes up to find a stranger, Foreigner, A City Fly, arriving with an enormous egg. Flipo, the chief of the community, quickly steals it from Foreigner. In the insect world, *Ovo* is a precious gift symbolizing the cycle of life, abundance, and love. Ladybug and Foreigner immediately fall for each other, and spend the rest of the show trying to ignite that love. Master Flipo does not trust the Foreigner for his Ladybug, so he tests him. Will the Foreigner get his egg back? Will the Ladybug find her true love? Will *Ovo* reveal its wonder? You can see it all unfold under the Big Top!

**How varied is the cast of characters and their personalities?**

There are 54 artists in the show, and each one has their own insect personality, and it really shows when you are watching the show. During the creation, the director was very persistent in making sure that each of us has our own distinct personalities, movements, and moments onstage.

**You've had a varied background, and are also "out" personally. How do the National Shakespeare Conservatory; clown gigs; your one-woman show, *The Mammy Project*; and being out and proud all connect?**

I just am. I feel blessed to have a varied life, and to love the things that I do. I want to do the things that bring joy and education to the world, and to those around me. All of the things that you mentioned above are my life. Nothing is forced or announced. It's just me finding my joy and living my life. Yes, I am a woman, I am black, I am a classically trained actress, I am a clown, and I fall

in love with women. All of these qualities are connected in me because I exist.


**"Coccinelle" is French for "ladybug," and the stage name of transsexual showgirl Jacques Dufresnoy in the 1950s. Coincidence?**

When I told a friend from Israel that my character was "Coccinelle," she had no idea it was French, and told me that this is what they call transgendered/transsexual people. I think it's very cool and appropriate. When I put those eyelashes on as "La Coccinelle," I feel like the biggest drag queen for sure. Diva! I love it!

**What would you say is *Ovo*'s main message?**

I believe that the message of *Ovo* is celebration, life, and love, no matter what kind of bug you are. We're all bugs, ya know?

**And yours?**

No matter who you love, you're gonna love *Ovo*! 

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## Nan Goldin's *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*

Documenting the intimate lives of friends and lovers, as well as trusting acquaintances from bar scenes in New York and Boston, photographer Nan Goldin compiled hundreds of images made over two decades into *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*.

Georges Dudognon Greta Garbo in the Club St. Germain circa 1950s Collection SFMOMA, Foto Forum purchase © Estate of Georges Dudognon

*Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance, and the Camera Since 1870* is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Tate Modern. Major support for the exhibition is provided by the Trellis Fund and the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

The Walker Art Center's presentation is made possible by major support from Martha and Bruce Atwater and Elizabeth Redleaf. Additional support is generously provided by Miriam and Erwin Kelen. Media partner *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine*.

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*After the Quake.* Photo by Dan Norman

***After the Quake*** — This production of Japanese writer Haruki Murakami's stories, based on the 1995 Kobe earthquake, is eerily prescient in light of Japan's recent earthquake cataclysm. Frank Galati's 2005 adaptation probes beneath tectonic plates, as well as romantic rivalry. Director Amy Rummenie says it "explores friendship through a lens that splits love from desire." Murakami has stated, "Sex is like a dream when you are awake; I think dreams are collective. Some parts do not belong to yourself." **Through May 26** • People's Center, 425 20th Ave. S., Mpls. • (612) 375-0300 • [www.walkingshadowcompany.org](http://www.walkingshadowcompany.org)



*Got it Made.* Photo by Karen Pennaz

***Got it Made*** — You knew it was just a matter of time until someone came up with a musical about identity theft. Maureen Kane Berg and Tom Berg have conceived this madcap look inside the Cheeseman Real Estate Development Company, where the employees band together to sniff out an identity thief within their ranks. Office politics, cell phones, and romance nod to the old-fashioned, classic Broadway style. Dan Sola, known for his witty stand-up satire, directs. **Through June 12** • Pillsbury House Theatre, 3501 Chicago Ave. S., Mpls. • (612) 825-0459 • [www.gotimadeproductions.web.com](http://www.gotimadeproductions.web.com)

***Anatomy of Gray*** — Director Lynn Musgrave's ensemble captures the parochial spirit of the 1880s Bible Belt in Jim Leonard's numinous coming-of-age story about teenaged June (Amelia Mohn). She becomes acutely infatuated with a Jewish healer, Dr. Galen Gray (John Adler), who is scapegoated when a plague hits. He knows that germs exist, but the community does not. In turn, the actors touchingly portray how phobias surrounding the physical body foment collective dissonance. **Through May 22** • Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave., Mpls. • (612) 333-3010 • [www.TheatreintheRound.org](http://www.TheatreintheRound.org)



*Anatomy of Gray.* Photo Copyright Act One, Too, Ltd.

***All's Well That Ends Well*** — Shakespeare's mystical comedy uses the "bed-trick" for both laughs and tension. Director Joseph Papke explains, "Shakespeare's time was no stranger to the Madonna/whore complex. The easiest way to discredit a woman was to rob her of her 'prize'—her virginity. In 1604, women were not equal players in society. A woman's only hope for security was to marry well. What a woman brought to a union was a dowry and her own sexual purity. Without those two things, a woman's 'value' to society was sadly negligible." **Through May 21** • Walker Community Church, 3104 16th Ave. S., Mpls. • [www.classicalactorsensemble.org](http://www.classicalactorsensemble.org) ➔



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[ THEATER ]



*Opus*. Photo by Petronella Ytsma

**Opus** — Attending gay-oriented plays at a time when the same-sex marriage controversy has gripped the state is a great way of fine-tuning our understandings, individually and collectively, of gay relationships. Just like straight relationships, gay ones have their foibles, their joys, and their complexities, not to mention longevity.

▼ *Opus*, by violinist-turned-playwright Michael Hollinger, explores the homoromantic undercurrents of a string quartet under pressure as they prepare for a White House concert. Peter Hansen and Paul de Cordova, two handsome stars of Twin Cities theater, play Dorian and Elliot, gay men with a mutual past.

Hansen shares, “For my character, Dorian, his passion and love are inextricably intertwined with his music. For him, the closeness he feels with Elliot is bound up in the intimacy they experience when they play together. Dorian describes how a great string quartet is like lovemaking, where it is impossible to tell where one person begins and the other ends—how making music in this fashion is like two lovers rolling. When he and Elliot first met and fell in love,

it was because in large part of this shared experience and the intimacy they experienced.”

De Cordova adds, “As their relationship deteriorates, in part because of Dorian’s mental illness, and in part because of Elliot’s closeted and highly controlled lifestyle, the quartet and their lives are thrown into turmoil. The conflicts that start in their deeply imperfect relationship are intensified by their close working relationship, and it is the way that these two worlds are enmeshed that ends up changing everything.” **Through May 29 • Park Square Theatre, 20 W. 7th Pl., St. Paul • (651) 291-7005 • [www.parksquaretheatre.org](http://www.parksquaretheatre.org)**

[ Theater ]



*Hot Jazz at da Funky Butt*. Photo Courtesy of Lab Theater

▼ **Hot Jazz at da Funky Butt** — Interact, the region’s premier theater for persons with disabilities, salutes The Big Easy with this original musical. Composer Aaron Gabriel notes, “The songs were written from improvisations that the actors did, and from meetings and experience in both Minneapolis and New Orleans. Also, I tried to represent as many styles as possible from blues to French Baroque to African drumming to Italian opera to ragtime to military marches—just to name a few. Director Jeanne Calvit points out that the autistic actors, who have terrific memories, “learn everyone’s lines and cues. They are very helpful in the rehearsal process.” **Through May 21 • Lab Theater, 700 N. 1st St., Mpls. • (612) 333-7977 • [www.labtheater.org](http://www.labtheater.org)**

[ Film ]

**In Context: Terrence Malick Retrospective** — Beautiful, bleak, and uncompromisingly existential, the epic films of Terrence Malick are dark visions of American cultural history that utterly reconfigure our national self-image. The

Walker’s big screen will serve them splendidly. *The Thin Red Line* (1999)—screening May 20—is a spectral illumination of World War II’s Battle of Guadalcanal. *The New World* (2005)—screening May 21—is a primal reimagining of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith. Malick’s latest, *The Tree of Life*—screening June 1—is a Midwestern family epic. **Through June 1 • Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Ave., Mpls. • (612) 375-7600 • [www.walkerart.org](http://www.walkerart.org)** □



*The Thin Red Line*. Photo Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation



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800 Cleveland Ave., St. Paul, Dinner and Drinks

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*Sherlock Holmes and the Red Demon*  
*Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace Murders*  
*The Magic Bullet: A Locked Room Mystery*

Larry Millett

These two reprints and a brand-new adventure are a welcome addition to the University of Minnesota Press *Minnesota Mystery* series. Millett, also author of the nonfiction *Lost Twin Cities* and *Twin Cities Then and Now*, scores the hat trick, combining Sherlock Holmes; historical Minnesota; and his own most excellent sleuth, Shadwell Rafferty. *Red Demon* centers on the devastating Hinckley firestorm of 1894. *Ice Palace* and the newly released *Magic Bullet* take place in crime-ridden Old St Paul. Millett's specificity in locale and speech, together with his Sherlockian erudition, lend credence to the appearance of Holmes and Watson, and enmesh the reader in these intricate plots. For the ensnared, three other early volumes are in the series.

**University of Minnesota Press**  
**\$14.95/\$14.95/\$24.95**

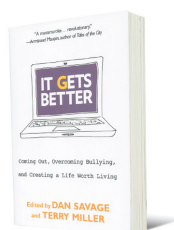


*Donovan's Big Day*

Lesléa Newman; Ill. Mike Dutton

A perfect book for kids in this season of brides and grooms, *Donovan's Big Day* captures the excitement of a big boy with a big job—ring bearer—at the wedding. In this case, Donovan's two moms are to be the happy couple, and young Donovan wants everything to be just right. Newman, author of the near-iconic *Heather Has Two Moms*, has at the heart of this tale love and family. She peoples it with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and dozens of well-wishing grown-ups seen from a Donovan's-eye level, all come to celebrate the joyous event. He bears the rings with aplomb and dignity, and at the words "You may now kiss the brides!" carries out his final duty.

**Tricycle Press**  
**\$15.99**

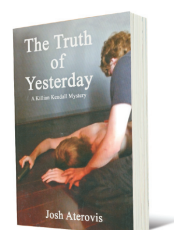


*It Gets Better: Coming Out, Overcoming Bullying, and Creating a Life Worth Living*

Ed. Dan Savage and Terry Miller

It really does get better. Dan Savage and his husband, Terry Miller, are determined to see that bullied teens—gay and straight—get the message. Prompted by a rash of gay-teen suicides last year, the pair uploaded a video on YouTube, and started the It Gets Better Project to state their message. Very quickly, thousands—including President Barack Obama—joined in urging teens to seek help, to hang in, and to make it through. This book offers a diverse array of contributors, including Chaz Bono, Kate Clinton, Hillary Clinton, Ellen DeGeneres, and David Sedaris. Satirist Sedaris, a victim in his own time, suggests, "Keep a diary, to record the many injustices you've suffered, and later turn them into stories."

**Dutton**  
**\$21.95**



*The Truth of Yesterday: A Killian Kendall Mystery*

Josh Aterovis

He's only 18, but he has a boyfriend, Micah, (almost) to die for, and a history of solving murders. He also has Gifts, unwanted but persistent, allowing him to see and talk to the dead. *Truth* is Aterovis's fourth book featuring detective assistant Killian Kendall, and the author pulls out all the stops. Micah's past comes home to roost, and Killian is plunged into the seamy—and in this instance fatal—world of male escorts, while also trying to find out what is happening to a good friend. Add to this the ghost of a young woman haunting his father's B&B, and you've got the recipe for mayhem, chills, and a gripping read with this seriously overbooked and extreme-sleuthing young hero.

**P.D. Publishing**  
**\$22.99** ■

## APRIL SHOWERS BRING BITCH FLOWERS REPRISES



Photo Courtesy of Bitch Flowers

NO PLANS TO go out of town because of soaring gas prices? Then, the fourth-annual *April Showers Bring Bitch Flowers* on May 27 is the place to be!

The event stars the ultimate party doll, Bitch Flowers, along with the emcee doll of the North, Camille Collins, and the dirty gurl doll, Krystal Kleer. This year's special guest dolls are Polly and the Hot Buttered Crackers, plus Esmé Rodríguez. A special closing live performance features Harley Wood and the Wrecked Wheelhouse. The night continues with the spinning sensations of DJ Shied.

Fashions are by Lollycopter, Emma Berg, Raul Osorio, and Ivan Idland.

It's 18-plus with ID. A portion of the proceeds benefits District 202.

Purchase tickets in advance for \$12 at the Varsity Theater, Electric Fetus, or <[www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/39383](http://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/39383)>. Tickets are \$15 at the door.

Bitch Flowers also hosts Bitch-N-Brunch, a Lavender Summer of Pride event, on June 26 at Seven Steakhouse in Minneapolis. ■

### ***April Showers Bring Bitch Flowers***

May 27 • 8 PM  
Varsity Theater  
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OUT  
ON THE TOWN

MAY-JUNE



*Ovo.* Photo Courtesy of Cirque du Soleil



*After the Quake.* Photo by Dan Norman



*Opus.* Photo by Petronella Yisma

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

**Note:** This calendar includes events formerly in the Bar Calendar.

#### THURSDAY, MAY 19

**Out to Brunch Over 60s Group.** 6 PM. Taste of Thailand, 1671 Selby Ave., St. Paul. Call Sharon at (612) 866-4562 for more info or directions. <www.outtobrunch.org>.

#### FRIDAY, MAY 20

**Art-A-Whirl.** May 20, 5-10 PM. May 21, Noon-8 PM. May 22, Noon-5 PM. Various NE Mpls. Venues. <www.nemaa.org>.

**Out in the Kitchen: Hanging with the Boys.** 6-8 PM. Midtown Global Market, 920 E. Lake St., No. 107, Mpls. (612) 568-5486. Sign up in advance @ <www.kitcheninthe market.com>.

**The Mid-Continental Express Television Dance Party.** 7:30 PM. Patrick's Cabaret, 3010 Minnehaha Ave. S., Mpls. (612) 724-6273. <www.patrickscabaret.org>.

**Secret Love.** 8 PM. Through May 21. Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus: Out-

Loud! @ Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE, Mpls. (612) 436-1129. <www.ritz dolls.com>.

**Dragged Out.** 9:30 PM. Town House, 1415 University Ave. W., St. Paul. (651) 646-7087. <www.townhousebar.com>.

**Foam Party.** Gay 90's. 408 Hennepin Ave., Mpls. (612) 333-7755. <www.gay90s.com>.

#### SATURDAY, MAY 21

**Local Author Event: Jessie Chandler & Lori L. Lake.** 2 PM. True Colors Bookstore, 4755 Chicago Ave. S., Mpls. <www.jessiechandler.com>. <www.lorilake.com>.

#### SATURDAY, MAY 21

**SpringCon Comic Book Celebration.** 10 AM-5 PM. Through May 22. Minnesota State Fairgrounds, 1265 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. (612) 237-1801. <www.midwestcomicbook.com>.

#### SUNDAY, MAY 22

**Brewster's Birthday Ex-drag-a-ganza.** Triangle of Hope benefit for Clare

Housing. 5 PM. Town House, 1415 University Ave. W., St. Paul. <www.facebook.com/marybrewster>.

#### WEDNESDAY, MAY 25

**Out to Brunch Over 50s Potluck.** 7 PM. Call Janet or Judy at (612) 927-4568 for location. <www.outtobrunch.org>.

#### THURSDAY, MAY 26

**Ovo.** Through June 12. Cirque du Soleil @ Mall of America, Bloomington. <www.cirquedusoleil.com/ovo>.

#### FRIDAY, MAY 27

**Out to Brunch Writer's Group.** 7 PM. Call Margareth at (651) 766-5892 for location. <www.outtobrunch.org>.

**April Showers Bring Bitch Flowers.** 8 PM. Varsity Theater, 1308 4th St. SE, Mpls. <www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/39383>.

#### SATURDAY, MAY 28

**Iowa City Pride's Rainbow Run.** 7 AM. Shelter No. 7, Lower City Park, Iowa City, IA. <www.queerconnections.org>.

**Elegance.** 9 PM. Town House, 1415 University Ave. W., St. Paul. (651) 646-7087. <www.townhousebar.com>.

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 2

**Lavender's Summer of Pride Kick-off Party.** 5:30-10 PM. Nicollet Island Pavilion, 40 Power St., Nicollet Island, Mpls. (612) 436-4660. <www.lavendermagazine.com/summerofpride>.

#### FRIDAY, JUNE 3

**Covers: A Pop Concert.** Through June 12. Cantus @ Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE, Mpls. (612) 435-0055. <www.cantussings.org>.

#### SATURDAY, JUNE 4

**Broadway and Movie Show Tunes Extravaganza.** Imperial Court of Minnesota benefit for Project for Pride in Living. 5 PM. Gay 90's. 408 Hennepin Ave., Mpls. <www.impcourtmm.com>.

**Lip Service.** 9 PM. Town House, 1415 University Ave. W., St. Paul. (651) 646-7087. <www.townhousebar.com>.

#### SUNDAY, JUNE 5

**East Central Minnesota Pride.** Pine

CALENDAR



## Anatomy of Gray.

Photo Copyright of Act One, Too, Ltd



*All's Well That Ends Well.* Photo by Zach Curtis

## Hot Jazz at da Funky Butt.

Photo Courtesy of Lab Theater



*Next to Normal.*  
Photo Courtesy of Ordway Center



*Next Fall.* Photo by Rich Ryan

27 28 29 30 31 1 2 3 4 5

City, MN. "East Central Minnesota Pride" on Facebook.

### ONGOING

**After the Quake.** Through May 26. Walking Shadow Theatre Company @ People's Center, 425 20th Ave. S., Mpls. (612) 375-0300. <www.walkingshadowtheatrecompany.org>.

**All's Well That Ends Well.** Through May 21. Classical Actors Ensemble @ Walker Community Church, 3104 16th Ave. S., Mpls. <www.classicalactorsensemble.org>.

**Anatomy of Gray.** Through May 22. Theatre in the Round Players, 245 Cedar Ave., Mpls. (612) 333-3010. <www.theatreintheround.org>.

**Avenue Q.** Through May 29. Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S. 4th St., Mpls. (612) 338-6131. <www.mixedblood.com>.

**Arsenic and Old Lace.** Through June 5. Guthrie Theater, 818 S. 2nd St., Mpls. (612) 377-2224. <www.guthrietheater.org>.

**Dinner with the Tsars: Imperial Russian Porcelain.** Through Aug. 7. The Museum of Russian Art, 5500 Stevens Ave. S., Mpls. (612) 821-9045. <www.tmor.org>.

**God of Carnage.** Through Aug. 7. Guthrie Theater, 818 S. 2nd St., Mpls. (612) 377-2224. <www.guthrietheater.org>.

**Got it Made.** Through June 12. Pillsbury House Theatre, 3501 Chicago Ave. S., Mpls. (612) 825-0459. <www.gotitmadeproductions.web.com>.

**Hot Jazz at da Funky Butt.** Through May 21. Interact Theater @ Lab Theater, 700 N. 1st St., Mpls. (612) 333-7977. <www.labtheater.org>.

**In Context: Terrence Malick Retrospective.** Through June 1. Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Ave., Mpls. (612) 375-7600. <www.walkerart.org>.

**In the Red and Brown Water.** Through June 4. Guthrie Dowling Studio, 818 S. 2nd St., Mpls. (612) 377-2224. <www.guthrietheater.org>.

**I Wish You Love.** Through May 22. Penumbra Theatre, 270 N. Kent St., St. Paul. (651) 224-3180. <www.penumbra-theatre.org>.

**The Marvelous Wondrettes.** Through July 24. Plymouth Playhouse, 2705 Annapolis Ln. N., Plymouth. (763) 553-1600. <www.plymouthplayhouse.com>.

**Next Fall.** Through May 22. Jungle Theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave. S., Mpls. (612) 822-7063. <www.jungletheater.com>.

**Next to Normal.** Through May 22. Ordway Center, 345 Washington St., St. Paul. (651) 224-4222. <www.ordway.org>.

**Opus.** Through May 29. Park Square Theatre, 20 W. 7th Pl., St. Paul. (651) 291-7005. <www.parksquaretheatre.org>.

**The Sexy Librarian.** Through May 21. Minneapolis Theater Garage, 711 W. Franklin Ave., Mpls. (612) 280-9210. <www.jokingenvelope.com>.

**Shades of Red: The Evolution of Early Soviet Art.** Through Sept 15. The Museum of Russian Art, 5500 Stevens Ave. S., Mpls. (612) 821-9045. <www.tmor.org>.

**Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs.** Through Sept. 5. Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. (651) 221-9444. <www.smm.org>.

**The Year of Magical Thinking.** Through May 21. 1517 Central Ave. NE, Mpls. (612) 548-1380. <www.nimbustheatre.com>.



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Photo by George Holdgrafer



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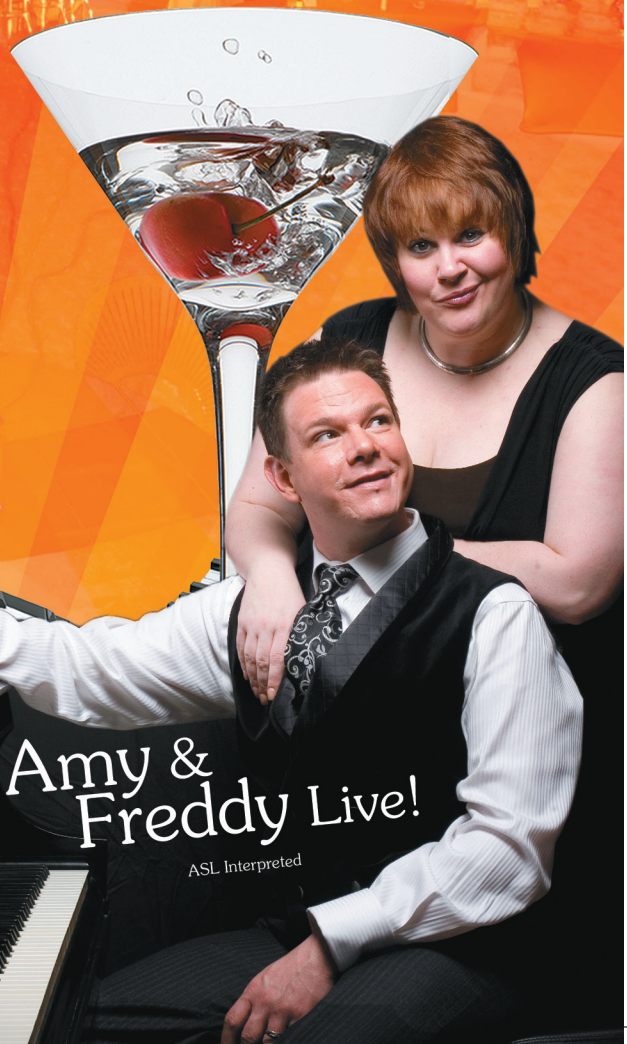
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# ➔ TRATTORIA TOSCA

**The cuisine is awesome, and the menu is reasonably priced.**

Trattoria Tosca has been on my to-do list since soon after it opened, but in this case, I was glad our magazine's biweekly schedule encourages patience.

A number of commendable chefs have been associated with the two-year-old Tosca, but Head Chef Ian Gray has the makings of a prodigy. It has been quite some time since I've outright fawned, and over a pasta dish, no less. So, if this world has begun to make a cynic of you, my readers, make a pilgrimage to Tosca. The Ramp Orchetti alone is a small miracle.



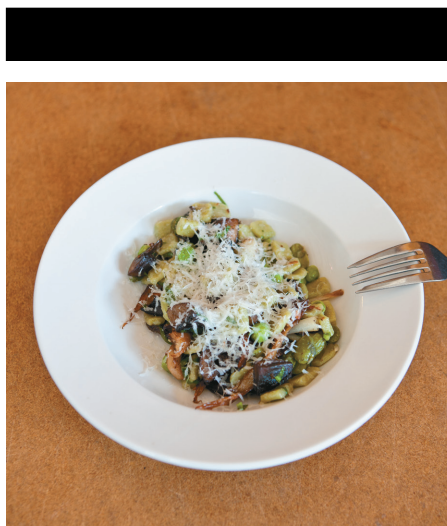
We started off the evening with a glass of Rina Ianca Grillo Viognier (\$9/\$35). Tosca has a tidy selection of Italian wines, but as our server noted, Italian whites can be on the sharp side. This blend is mercifully mellow and dry, but has sufficient body to remain interesting. Furthermore, it makes fast friends with the Beet Carpaccio (\$9), a playful dish of thinly sliced beets, pickled onions, arugula, pecorino romano, and avocado.

Many restaurants feature a seasonal dish of beets and arugula, and with the exception of overdoing the dressing, it's almost impossible to fail. At Tosca, the beet "carpaccio" not only succeeds, but also sets a new standard. When sliced as thin as rose petals, even the humble root vegetable blooms—it becomes young and delicate, even sensual.

As an opera-lover, I was tempted to pepper this article with references to this trattoria's vengeful namesake, but after dining there, I'm already drifting hopelessly, and rather romantically, in the direction of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Ah, well—Gray has made a rose from a root cellar; I must make a Wagner of a Puccini.

I've already referenced the Ramp Orchetti (\$10/\$19), but it is worthy of far more than a brief introduction. Gray actually featured this very dish on KARE 11. The basic recipe can be found online through the station's website. The ingredients—a mix of mushrooms, peas, fava beans, ramp bulbs, and pecorino romano—suggest a healthy, relatively simple, garden pasta dish. That expectation is innocent enough, but deceptive all the same. The Ramp Orchetti is soft, warm, earthy, and uncommonly fragrant—more like a lover's kiss than a food.

The Arugula Fettuccini (\$6/\$11) is fresh and vibrant, with a burst of lemon zest and black pepper. In all honesty, after the orchetti, it was difficult to give the fettuccini its full due. However, I very much appreciate the kitchen's practicality in offering half-size pasta dishes. So often, you want to enjoy a pasta as well as a meat course, but with American-sized portions, it's impossible to do justice to both. Here, one can, and better still, with a glass of Poggio Morino Vermentino (\$7/\$27), a surprisingly savory Italian white. Our server told me the front-of-house staff is looking forward to another training session on Italian wines, and what I wouldn't give to be an invisible guest...the angels can



(Facing page, from left) Pressed Chicken; Chef Ian Gray. (This page, clockwise from upper left) Ramp Orchetti; Beet Carpaccio; Amaretto Chocolate Custard. Photos by Hubert Bonnet



still take their "share" after bottling, correct?

Both the Sonoma Cutrer Chardonnay (\$11/\$42), and the Mocali I Piaggioni Rosso (\$8/\$31) are paired with the Pressed Chicken (\$22) and the exquisite Brussels Sprouts (\$7/10), which are treated to a garlic, shallot, and balsamic reduction. If you're new to the intricacies of wine, and want to experience the vast difference a pairing can make, repeat this order. The red wine by itself was supple, dry, and fruity, but it brought a handsome smokiness out of the chicken that wasn't there before. The chardonnay, on the other hand, skipped lightly past the rich pan sauce, the onion, the potatoes, and the carrots, and clung tightly to the flavor of the bird. This white also delivered the same intensity to the Brussels sprouts, finding inherent drama in the vegetable itself.

A light Amaretto Chocolate Custard (\$8) and a small glass of port (\$8) finished an unforgettable meal. It was only after our rapture began to subside that we noticed the restaurant was almost empty. Perhaps Tosca gets its rush only on the weekends, but even on a Thursday night, for the won-

ders coming from Gray's kitchen, this restaurant should be packed. I am not the first food writer to gush, and the menu is reasonably priced.

Perhaps my dining partner discovered the restaurant's Achilles' heel: the lighting was too harsh for the hour. That's the *only* fault we could find, and for that, Gray's talents should earn Tosca a full pardon. □

**Trattoria Tosca**  
3415 W. 44th St., Mpls  
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[www.trattoriatosca.com](http://www.trattoriatosca.com)



## [ OUT ON THE TOWN **FOOD BITES** ]

### [ **LATE-NIGHT DINING** ] by Carla Waldemar

All dressed up, and nowhere to eat? One of the gustatory trials of living in Minnesota (in truth, they are mighty few) is that most of our kind-of-fine dining establishments pull down the shades at 10 PM. So, you come out of a play or a concert dressed to kill, and Mickey's Diner just won't do. These late-night options deliver more than a greasy spoon.



#### **112 EATERY**

This snug little salon is run by a chef who used to work for others, so when he opened his own kitchen, he charted hours with his fellow cooks in mind. Once these buddies lock their own doors, they head over here (along with the city's smart set)

for those addictive little lamb bones and harissa-spiked eggs.

#### **BRADSTREET CRAFTHOUSE**

Welcome to this sweet little sleeper in Block E's fancy-schmancy Graves Hotel. Glad tidings arrive in the form of tasty tapas-style selections (don't miss the fab sliders),

partnered by flights of wine. The party continues until 2 AM.

#### **DUPLEX**

This snazzy little hangout welcomes hungry night owls to swoop in for anything, everything, from a clever list of small plates to creative entrées in a setting that's Uptown's

answer to Soho. There's even a late-night happy hour.

#### **IL GATTO**

Nice kitty! This kitchen keeps cattin' around until 2 AM, serving portions sized XXL for the young and the restless of Uptown in its urbane dining room. Since Chef Tim McKee became padrone of the cathouse, the food quality has soared. And cheers for the \$5 glass-and-a-half of stomped-on-yesterday's plonk.

#### **THE LOWBROW**

They keep the lights on late at this new neighborhood watering hole on South Nicollet, so grab a table under the amazing deer-in-the-headlights mural, or belly up to the bar to sample the many local suds on tap to accompany the kitchen's home cooking.

#### **MONTE CARLO BAR AND GRILL**

The Monte has been the darling of the après-anything crowd for decades, where, beyond the best



112 Eatery. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

back bar in town, the café sports an easygoing menu of beef (burgers to sirloin) and beyond, delivered by vet waitresses performing marathons with platters of fries.

#### **W.A. FROST**

Call it the 911 of St. Paul—a lifesaver for those who've come famished from the Xcel Center or the Ordway in hopes of good food and wine. The quietly elegant setting keeps the romance of the evening simmering long after the final curtain. □



The Lowbrow. Photo by Hubert Bonnet



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# Word of the Day: Class

I STARTED A dinner club with some friends. It's fun. We take trips to different restaurants each month.

A lovely proposition to put before someone, as the summer crosses the horizon: Before you hop into that skimpy swimsuit, why not stuff your face with a ton of food, and load up on the booze?

Nah, it's fun, though. We make people who've never met sit next to each other, give them conversation starters, and watch the sparks fly. Thankfully, no actual sparks yet. Everyone has gotten along fine so far. You should try your own version sometime.

Our conversation-starters are questions—ones you'd never otherwise ask someone you've just met, but because everyone's in the same boat, it's OK.

One of the questions to ask your newly acquainted dinner partner: "What do you like about me?"

Totally awkward? Yep. Classy? You have to be there. Fun? You bet your ass it is.

Anyway, during a recent dinner at Seven (delish), everyone just *knew* I was the one who'd come up with that question. "Jussssss-

tinnnnn," they said accusingly, wagging the "Index Finger of Inflection," "Did you come up with this question?"

No comment. I don't want to think too much about what that insinuation means. Would you?

In other news, we (my roomie, Ty, and I) had a great big after-bar party in celebration of—uh, being alive? Among those in attendance: the fabulous and rare Pat, whose night usually ends at 1 AM on the weekends. Isn't that when it's just getting good? I kid, I kid. Anyway—if he's still alive at 3 AM, you know it's gonna be good, and this time was no disappointment.

Pat is awesome, because he's one of those people who acts the same drunk as he does sober: fun all the time, while the rest of us walk around like we have a stick up our ass until we have a few shots.

I digress. The after-bar party recap: [SORRY, WE CANNOT PUBLISH THIS TASTELESS MATERIAL—ed.]...and that's when she said it was a *lobster* that was caught up there. Whew! Good times, good times.

So, go get gussied up, and throw a dinner party, an after-bar party, whatever! Go have *fun*, and play safe. *That's class.* ■




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# A Good Guest

The joy of weekendening at someone's home can go from *treat* to *treatment* very easily. Between the valet running off to the circus and the host's inability to train the housemaid, both of you may be left to pick up the slack. Fear not: Send your RSVPs, pack your attaché, and remember these golden rules. (You might tear out this page, and paste it into the lid of your steamer for future reference.)

- **The invitation** to be a guest is both a privilege and an honor, so treat it as such. If other plans conflict, send your regrets immediately. No one wants an RSVP at the last hour.

- **Ask the right questions** to minimize confusion. Knowing what activities are planned can help you pack your trunk accordingly. Will you be hitting the gym, dining with friends at the club, or dancing like a fiend to

cheesy house music? It sets the mind reeling, doesn't it?

- **Schedule** activities for yourself if your host will be working during your visit, to prevent inconvenience and misunderstandings. As a golden rule, good guests entertain themselves by day and their host/hostess by night.

- **Frame of mind.** As a guest it's your greatest tool for success. You may be exposed to the shortcomings of your host's planning (or lack thereof), inability to make decisions, or homicidal neat-freak tendencies. Don't worry—take a deep breath, and remember your frame of mind: I *am* a guest.

- **Being a guest is not like staying in a hotel.** Be aware of your messes, and pick up after yourself.

- **Expenses** should be shared with your

host. It's an important way of showing gratitude. Take your host out for a meal, and replace the bar stock you emptied. Gestures like these show your respect for your hosts and their kindness.

- **Before departing**, strip your bed linens to minimize cleanup efforts. Call a local florist to order a small arrangement, delivered the day after you leave. If you're especially well-bred, you'll have your thank-you note written and posted before you even arrive home.

It seems that with all we need to think of and do, we might never leave for a weekend at all. Remember the rules, and you'll be invited frequently and graciously. With just 52 weekends in a year, choosing how, where, and with whom to spend them will become your new challenge.

## Fabulous Host/Hostess Gifts

We all know that a hostess gift is a kindness best kept simple. No need to be extravagant, but do be tasteful.



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### Veuve Clicquot

Need a reason to celebrate? Your stay is reason enough. If you're a good guest, your host might even share. Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin Brut \$32.99

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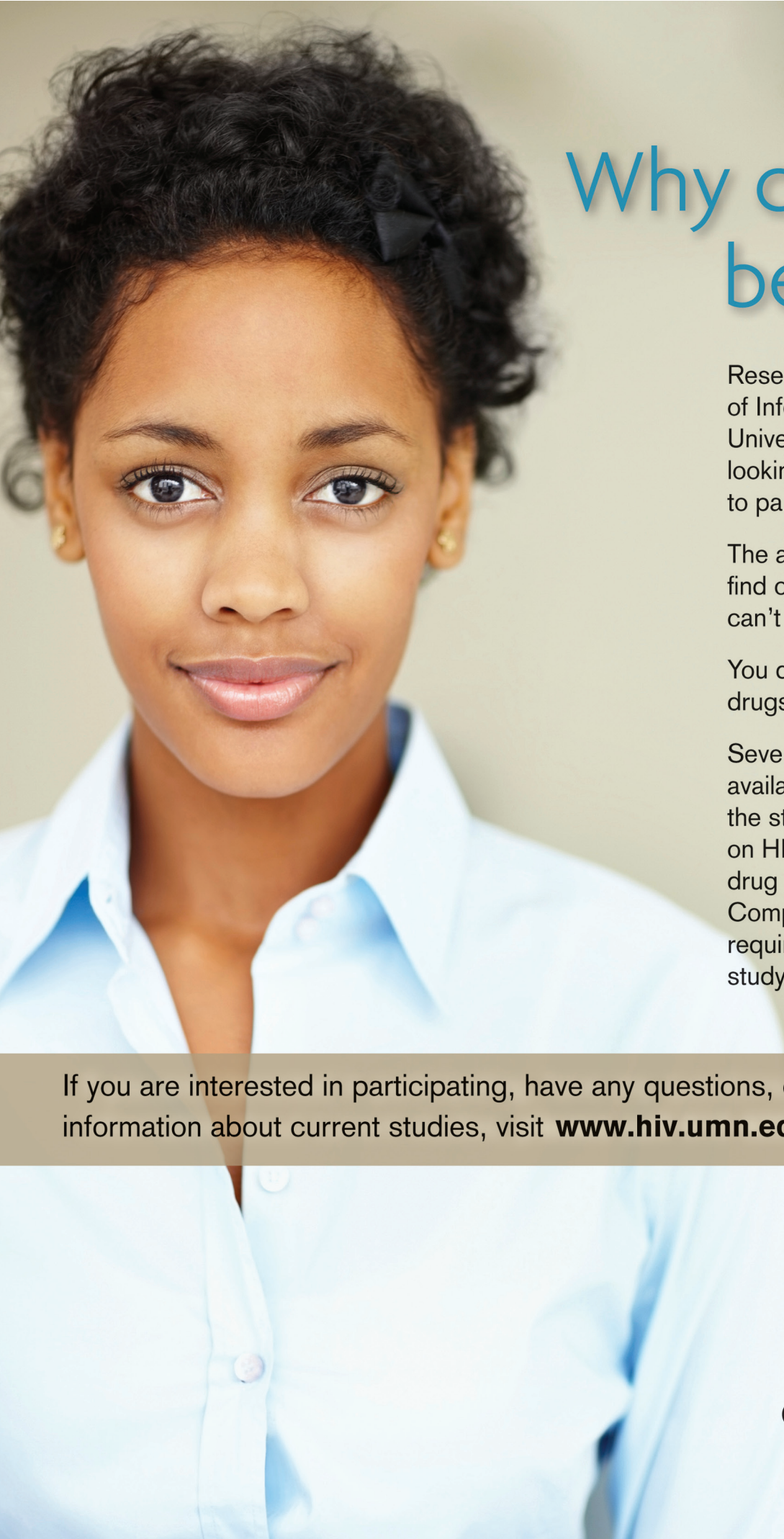


### Children's Book

This neat new book will delight your host's children, and proceeds from sales of the book benefit charity. *The Governor's Mouse* \$20

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# KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

Music, food, and history are among this city's attractions.

East Tennessee, anchored by Knoxville, has long been a contested battle prize. During the French and Indian War, its British Governor warned, "If ever the French become masters of the Cherokee nation, it would render your Majesty's cause very precarious." Chief Dragging Canoe countered, "The [Indians' forced resettlement] may be all right for those too old to fight. As for me, I have my young warriors"—contrary sentiments eloquently dramatized in Knoxville's East Tennessee History Center.

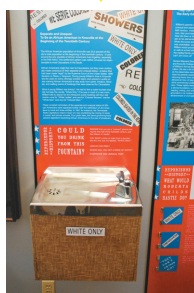
Fast-forward to the Civil War, when East Tennessee went pro-Union, while the rest of the state allied with the Confederates. When the state seceded, the East's mountaineers dug in their heels, resulting in "nasty guerrilla warfare in well-guarded mountain passes," as our guide recounted with the drama of a CNN reporter. As brother fought brother in the Battle of Knoxville, the city's strong-hearted women fed the troops, and harbored fugitives.

Meanwhile, one Joseph Mabry, owner of a plantation anchored by the show-offy mansion he built in 1858 (open to tour), couldn't make up his mind. His new home housed first the Confederate Army, then, when he switched allegiances, Union soldiers. A feisty man himself, he killed his business partner in a gunfight. Bucolic Bethel Cemetery, just down the road, holds the graves of 1,600 Confederate soldiers who perished nearby.

Today's campaigns have morphed from military to musical, as Knoxville assails Nashville as the True Home of Country Music. Follow the Cradle of Country Music walking tour (register at the Visitor Center), celebrating the heyday of 1921-1924, when the tunes of mountaineers who built



(Above and Right) James White's Fort, a home of James White, who settled here on a 1,000-acre grant. His first home, furnished with original tools and artifacts for the period, gives a glimpse into the daily existence of early settlers in the East Tennessee region. (Below) Beck Cultural Center. Photos Courtesy of Knoxville Tourism and Sports Corporation







(Left) Tennessee Theatre, the Official State Theatre of Tennessee and one of the few great movie palaces from the Roaring '20s still in operation. (Center) Armstrong-Lockett House (Crescent Bend) & W.P. Toms Memorial Gardens, a historic home on a three-acre formal Italian-terraced garden overlooking the Tennessee River. (Right) Patrick Sullivan's Steakhouse in the Old City, Downtown Knoxville.



their own fiddles ("Little Brown Jug," "Turkey in the Straw") went big-time after a wily record salesman came across four blind musicians playing for pennies at the railroad station. He recorded their ditties, and the rest is music history. (Earlier, in Market Square, the election of a future governor was settled by a fiddle contest.)

Roy Acuff got his start here, along with Elvis Presley. Hank Williams played (and died) here. The Everly Brothers headlined a radio show until its local sponsor declared, "They're no good!" So, they headed to Nashville. So did a young lady named Dolly Parton, who began her career in Knoxville at age 7. At 13, she notes, "I boarded a Greyhound bus to Nashville with my guitar, the songs I'd written, and all my belongings in a set of matched luggage: three paper bags."

By then, African-Americans had added bluegrass—and the banjo—to the mix. Today, Knoxville boasts more than 50 country-music venues, including daily Blue Plate Special performances at the Visitor Center over Station WDVX. At Noon precisely, the announcer cautions lunching listeners, "Quiet: We're fixin' to go lahve." "A performance here on DVX is a distinct résumé-builder," a knowing local nods. Next, wander over to Morelock Music, selling guitars with a side of live music.

Shows also erupt in the ubergorgeous Tennessee Theater, a movie-house belle from the 1920s, and the equally glam Bijou. Next door, at the Bijou Bistro, sample some

fine Southern cooking.

It's a favorite stop on the Culinary Walking Tour, also originating at the Visitor Center. We stopped at Shonos for boatloads of sushi, then meandered to Coolato, boasting some of the hemisphere's best gelato in flavors like salted caramel and Elvis (peanut butter, banana, and jelly, natch).

Next, it was on to Sapphire, a nightclub in a once-elite jewelry store. After caffeine at the Downtown Grind, fill up any remaining crannies with country ham at Mast General Store, a Knoxville original. "If we don't have it, you don't need it" is the mantra here, proven by a mélange of rag rugs and rocking chairs, wind chimes and camping gear.

Where else to eat? Ask any local, and chances are, he'll sally, "Litton's!" The owner, who watched the hangout burgeon from a grocery store to a burger mecca, relates, "My granddaddy started out running a commissary for the coal mines." Don't miss the diet-defying coconut cream pie.

In the heart of the Old City, eat (or, more accurately, lift a pint) at Patrick Sullivan's, a saloon from the 1880s that once doubled as a bordello; the Crown & Goose, a pub-cum-festive-beer garden; Pilot Light, a dive bar featuring (of course) live music; and The Pearl, whose cereal buffet is particularly popular at 2 AM.

One thing East Tennesseans don't fight over is the arts. Based in a former department store, The Emporium functions as headquarters for the city's symphony and

opera, but primarily as galleries with open-to-view artists' studios. Its First Friday events attract up to 3,000 party-goers, eager to sip wine, munch snacks—and, oh yeah, view the art. It's also the epicenter of April's Dogwood Arts Festival, with artisans' tents dominating Market Square, and driving tours to inhale the blossoms that transform the countryside.

To inhale the magic, contact the Knoxville Tourism & Sports Corporation at <www.Knoxville.org>. □

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## TWIN CITIES HOSTS NORTH STAR CLASSIC SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

The softball season went into full swing a few weeks ago, despite a cold start, thanks to Mother Nature. 2011 marks the 33rd year for the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League, making it likely the most successful GLBT sporting community in the state. With more than 30 teams and nearly 600 players, our local league is also one of the largest in the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance (NAGAAA) Open Division.

Games are played pretty much every Sunday through the spring and summer. Even if you are not a big sports fan, softball Sundays are a great time to enjoy the outdoors; hang out with friends; meet new ones; and, of course, check out the athletes in their uniforms! Games are played at Northeast Park in Minneapolis.

By the time this issue hits the stands, we'll be in the last week of the spring softball season. The league divides the summer and fall into three five-week periods, and the first is winding down now. So, you've got time to check out the teams Sunday, May 22, before the big tournament the following weekend. After the tournament, play will continue for 10 more weeks, with breaks for Pride Weekend and Fourth of July Weekend.

Regret not getting hooked up to play with a softball team sooner? Well, don't despair. Some teams may still have open spots available. The local league has multiple levels of competitive play. Teams play in Divisions A through D, which allocate teams based on their competitive standing.

Just go to <[www.tcgsll.org](http://www.tcgsll.org)> to get more information. The website is a one-stop softball stop. You'll find everything you need to know about the league, team scores, and standings, plus all sorts of schedules and contact information.

With Memorial Day closing in fast, Twin Cities softball players have something exciting to look forward to, as do the rest of us sports fans. The annual North Star Classic Softball Tournament, held over Memorial Day weekend, will bring more than 50 teams from around the country into our neck of the woods.

The tournament this year will be made up of teams from Divisions B, C, and D. Teams are already registered from Boston, Chicago, LA, Milwaukee, and even Toronto. For female softball players and fans, plans are to offer a women's division, if enough teams are interested.

The tournament is played at the Lexington-Diffley fields in Eagan. Food and drink will be available. This major highlight of the season is a really fun time for sports fans and athletes alike.

## [ RUGBY ]

## [ MAYHEM WILL COMPETE IN SEATTLE ]

→ The Mayhem Rugby Football Club will be flying to Seattle over Memorial Day weekend to compete in what amounts to their national league playoffs. Several GLBT rugby teams from across the country will be competing for hardware. Last year, the Mayhem won their first trophy ever, coming in second place in their division. The standings from this tournament largely affect the division the team will play in during the world cup of gay rugby, the Bingham Cup, in Manchester, England, in 2012. The Seattle trip will cap off the rugby team's spring season, which featured the most new players in the team's history. Curious about playing? Be on the lookout for summer touch rugby info. Follow the team on Facebook, and check out <[www.mayhemrfc.com](http://www.mayhemrfc.com)>. Good luck, Mayhem! □





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Celebrate Pride Month  
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## JUNE 2011

- 6.10: Grand Marshal Reception and Art Show Awards
- 6.17: Pride Night with the MN Lynx
- 6.18: Pride Boat Cruise, Stillwater
- 6.19: Pride Family Picnic, Como Pavilion
- 6.25-26: Pride Festival, Loring Park
- 6.25: Pride in Concert with Boogie Wonderland, God-des & She, Kaci Battaglia and Debbie Gibson
- 6.26: Pride Rainbow Run 5K before the Parade (new this year!)
- June 26: Ashley Rukes GLBTQA Pride Parade, Hennepin Avenue

See your favorite local artists free at Pride - Over 40 Minnesota-based acts are performing on 4 stages!

Twin Cities Pride is a fiscal year 2011 recipient of a Minnesota Festival Support grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is funded, in part, by the arts and cultural heritage fund as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the Legacy Amendment vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

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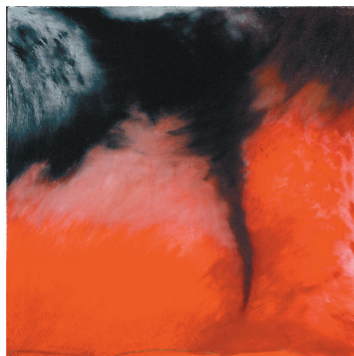
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## IDENTITIES EXPLORED

A CELEBRATION OF ART FROM THE GLBT COMMUNITY



Some see the GLBT community as a monolithic block, but with any group the community is made up of unique individuals. Art is a way that many people express their individuality, perspective, and identity. Identities Explored attempts to present a cross sectional peek into a community that many find a mystery. Curated by Larry Miller.

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### FRIDAY, JUNE 24

Opening Night  
Reception from  
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### SATURDAY, JUNE 25

Back Dock Party from  
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LAVENDER LENS |  
Photos by Sophia Hantzes

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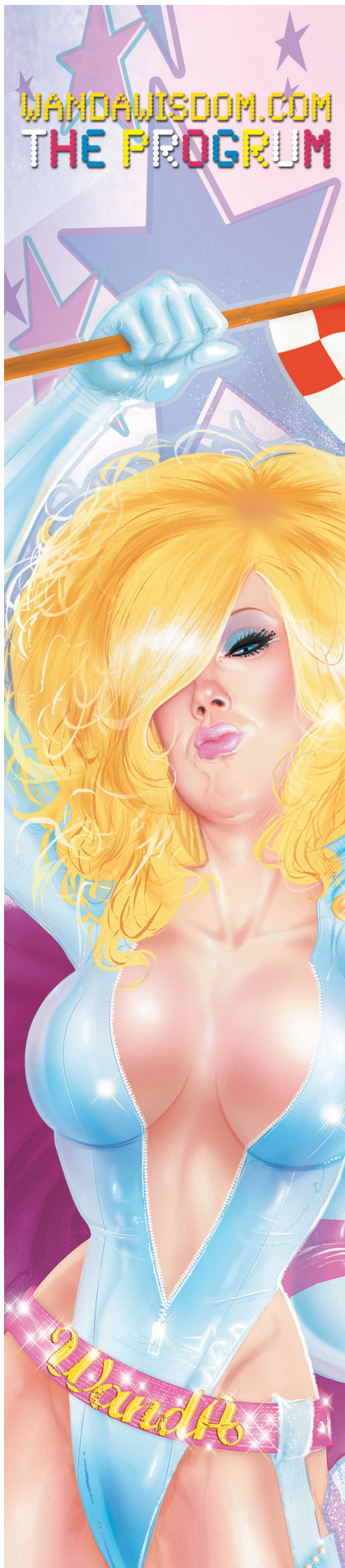
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# Redeeming Qualities

I THINK THE Minneapolis Police Department's gun redemption program is a pretty cool idea. I like the thought of taking Grandpa's old World War II service revolver (which he used to defend Fort Snelling Cemetery from marauding squirrel attacks) down to my local police station, and trading it in for tickets to Wrestlemania.

I heard that a suburban church recently launched a similar scheme for porn videos. It didn't work out. What was intended as a redemption program (in every sense of the word) quickly turned into a kinky swap meet in the church parking lot.

Still, there's something to be said for using people's greed to modify their behavior. Think of the problems we could solve:

**Junk Food** Convert all those Little Debbie cakes into high-fiber snacks that taste like nothing so much as the cardboard boxes they come in. Remember, if Twinkies are outlawed, only outlaws will have Twinkies.

**Cigarettes** This one may be moot, since smoking is already illegal pretty much everywhere except in the privacy of your own home, with blankets covering the windows lest offending vapors seep into the outside air. Still, the excitement of a cigarette-exchange program

might be worth its weight in sugar-free gum. Or then again, *not!*


**'70's Music** A whole generation still doesn't realize that listening to the Bee Gees can cause brain damage. (Some claim, however, that listening to the Bee Gees is caused by brain damage.) Trade in those old Captain and Tennille records for absolutely anything on CD. Granted, love will keep you together, but geez, get a life while you still can.

**Smart Phones** We have developed a shocking dependence on cell phones. Folks can't get through a restaurant meal without checking their bank balance or the weather in Peru. What can you give a phone junkie that would make him surrender his crutch? After all, you're taking away quite a lot when you remove the ability to piss off the people in the next booth. It would have to be something special, fun, personal, and every bit as empowering, in its own way, as a smart phone.

I know! How about some spanking videos? Just a thought, but consider the source.

Bye for now.

Kiss, kiss. □



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# An Ill Wind with Great Hair

I WAS AWAKENED this morning by an ill wind. This wind was covered with fur and teeth. This wind has a name: Fredo and Livia. They are my miniature schnauzers, and they are a pair of thugs. They wake me each morning by slapping me with their oversized panda paws.

The attack this morning seemed particularly brutal and urgent. I grabbed Fredo by his deceptively sweet face, and asked, "Do you sense a hurricane or tsunami, or are you just being a bastard?"

It's always hard to tell whether these dogs are trying to alert me to coming danger, or are simply in the mood to beat the hell out of me. This morning, something in Fredo's dense stare suggested trouble was afoot.

"What is it, boy?" I asked, looking deep into his vacant eyes. "Are you trying to tell me that horrible woman at the office is attempting to sabotage me again?"

I have spent a good many column inches over the years complaining about lesbians. However, my chief complaint is that not enough lesbians want to sleep with me.

Rarely do I have an issue with the collective character of lesbians. The great thing about being a lesbian is that because you love women, you are, in general, respect-

ful of all women. (Excluding, of course, the woman you happen to be sleeping with at the moment. Then, all bets are off.)

While I also love straight women, I loathe a particular brand of straight woman. That type—and please forgive me for invoking the devil's name in this column—is the Sarah Palin type. They're the vicious young Republican women who think the only way to get ahead is to oppress their sistahs, and rub up against the ruling men folk. They are sickly sweet, without humor, dimwitted, talentless, highly ambitious, and as dangerous as a viper with great hair.

The worst thing about this type is that they hate women. They consider us the enemy, and think we are too stupid to realize that they want to destroy us. So, they spend their evenings baking us cookies (which we all know isn't a gesture of goodwill, but a blatant attempt to get us fat), and spend their days sweetly stabbing us in the back.

One of these creatures recently slithered into my office, and immediately commenced causing trouble. Every woman in the joint quickly and universally reviled her, and a committee was created to nip this hateful wretch in her rapidly expanding bud. And by bud, I mean ass. Honestly, she should lay off the cookies

she insists on shoving down our throats.

My straight girls nominated me as head of our coven, because who better to take down this woman-hating menace than a sassy lesbian with great charm, big breasts, and a way with men?

As a self-loathing beast who refuses to release the terrible specter of her hero, George W. Bush, from her grasping clutches, she is horrified and terrified by gays. Especially *this gay*—the one with the adjoining office. She knows that her ham-handed techniques for manipulating men don't stand a chance against a lesbian who enjoys merrily titillating the boss with tales of girl-on-girl action.

My office sistah wives and I have hatched a scheme that uses my gayness as a glorious weapon. In meetings, they ask me if I plan on having sex with my girlfriend that night. I respond with a lustful "Yes!" even if it's *American Idol* night, and I know damn well that we never have sex on that night.

Then, we watch in delight as the men folk perk up and agree to my every demand, and as the she-devil quakes in disgust and fear, knowing she has met her match. □

Hey! I wrote a book. You can buy *Dateland* on Amazon.

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POR RODRO



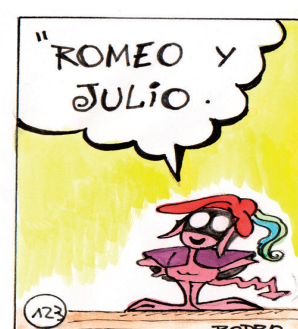
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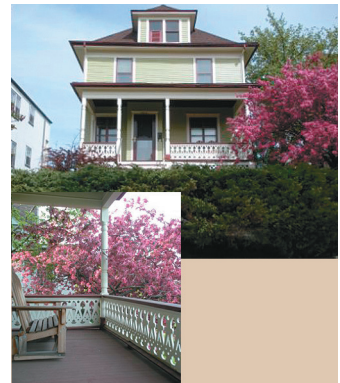
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**Dear Ms. Behavior:**

My ex-partner, Suzanna, and I, who were together for six years, broke up amicably but sadly a couple of years ago.

All was OK between us until she got a new girlfriend, Amber, who was very jealous. I took a graceful step back, figuring that Amber either would chill out or be such a pain in the ass that soon, she'd get the boot.

Anyway, now that Suzanna ousted Amber, she has been much more present, and, shall we say, needy. She wants me to cart her all over town, and run her errands and keep her company. We still own a car and a country house together, which requires a bit of scheduling and flexibility on both our parts.

I'd gotten used to the time away from Suzanna, and had begun to move on in my own life. It seems sad to me that Suzanna only wants me around when her life is empty.

The other problem is that Suzanna drinks

a lot, and wants me to hang out with her while she gets drunk. All these reasons—the alcohol, her neediness and unreasonable demands—are why I wanted to be apart from her in the first place. I feel like I have to break up with her all over again.

What should I do?

—SUZANNA'S (EX)-SLAVE

**Dear Suzanna's (Ex)-Slave:**

It seems depressing to go through the pain of shedding a girlfriend without any of the advantages—like extra joy and autonomy in your life.

Worse, you're suffering the negative aspects of your former relationship by chauffeuring Suzanna around, and watching her spill her martinis, without the benefits of delightful lesbian sex—or at least cuddling as a cunnilingus substitute.

If you feel she only wants you around

when her life is empty, why are you participating in this relationship? Don't you have anything better to do when she wants you to do her errands? What would happen if you refused to spend time with her when she was drunk?

Like most people, you probably hate the "V" word (victim, not vagina). It will help you in future relationships if you can use this situation with Suzanna as an opportunity to stop being victimized. But you first have to consider what you get out of this seemingly unrewarding scenario.

For example, do you require another person's dependency to make you feel worthy? Does being seen as reliable make you feel like you'll never be left?

You need to figure this out, so that you don't repeat the pattern with your next girlfriend, who'll also have you running in circles and doing tricks.

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Then, take a firm stand. Stop doing errands and babysitting your ex. Talk to Suzanna about selling the house and the car, and splitting the proceeds.

Stop being the poster dyke for "Ex-Lovers Are Forever," and try to find a little joy in your own independent life.

Carpe Diem, Missy.

#### Dear Ms. Behavior:

I just met the most wonderful guy. The good news: His last husband of three-and-a-half years was older than I am. The bad news: The guy is only 27 (ouch). I am 51.

Is it possible for a relationship to work when the age difference is so large?

He said age is just a number, but I know it is more than that. It is a record of how long each of us has been alive.

Thanks for your advice.

—FRANK

#### Dear Frank:

It would be lovely if age really were just a

number. But if that were true, Junior would not have consecutively chosen two men who were so much older than he.

Consciously or not, he's looking for something specific that he feels he can get from someone two-and-a-half decades his senior. (Hello, Daddy?)

Ms. Behavior sometimes receives letters from people with intergenerational relationships that have soured, particularly when the age difference is so large. The traits that had appealed to them in the beginning now annoy them.

The younger member of the couple complains the low-key lifestyle that once felt calming now seems too sedentary. The older member gripes that he secretly feels unable to maintain the level of activity his partner needs, and he yearns for more sophisticated companionship.

For the sake of perspective on your compatibility: Your boyfriend candidate was born 10 years before President Bill Clinton was inaugurated, and three years after MTV

started. He probably never wrote a school essay without a computer.

He reached puberty when you were already beginning middle age. By the time he was old enough to have sex, it was never safe to do it without a condom.

Finally, you're at the age where you need annual prostate exams, but your boyfriend still has not achieved his full bone mass.

None of this would matter much (you could consider it similar to a multicultural marriage), except that the chances of not engaging in a father-son dynamic are practically low.

Ultimately, your decision about whether to get involved should include some consideration of how you feel about that fact.

But who are we kidding? By the time you read this, you and Junior will probably be shopping for a Wii for your living room. □

© 2011 Meryl Cohn. Address questions and correspondence to <msbehavior@aol.com>. She is the author of Do What I Say: Ms. Behavior's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Etiquette (Houghton Mifflin). Signed copies are available directly from the author.

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# When Happiness Knows Your Name

The pursuit of happiness includes freedom to love for same-sex people.

LOOK UP FROM this page and around the room you're in.

No, seriously. Do it. *Pwease*.

If you're at a salon waiting your turn, look at the stylist laughing with his client. If you're in a coffee shop, look at the charmingly awkward *not-a-first-date-'cause-it's-just-coffee-date* happening in front of you. If you're by the lake, look at those dangerously ambitious power-walkers exchanging gossip and gardening tips.

If you're at home, look at your significant other. Or, if you're single, join me in looking at the beautiful furniture we worked so hard to buy, and erase the previous sentence from memory.

Take this scene in for a moment. Study everything surrounding you: the magazines on the table; the sound of blow dryers and chatter; the smell of coffee and tea. Feel the lakeside breeze on your cheeks and the grass beneath your palms.

Pay attention, even, to that speck of dust that appeared out of nowhere, delightfully coming to a rest on your clean coffee table.

Close your eyes, and lock this in. Relive the scene behind your eyelids. Tell yourself you'll remember it forever.

Breathe.

Now, tell yourself that everyone around you is happy. Tell yourself that no matter what, whomever, or whatever you see when you reopen your eyes is totally, 100 percent-certified, breathlessly, impossibly, happy.

Open your eyes, and take a deep breath.

The stylist is doing what he loves. The awkward coffee shop duo is sitting with butterfly storms in their bellies. The power-walkers are gliding with a little more pop in their step.



Your whimsical speck of coffee-table dust, is now sleeping at your side, dreaming of the moment you'll stand to stir it again.

Erase all cynicism for just this moment. Don't worry about whether this column is a sappy, trite, mess of a thing. You can do that later. Instead, cue the Little Miss Sunshine-esque *can't-be-sappy-'cause-it's-independent* music.

For just this fleeting moment, pretend that absolutely nothing is wrong in the world. Just...pretend.

Feels a little different, huh? If only it were so easy to feel this way all the time.

Well, it *could* be—kind of. If we all just went on pretending nothing was wrong, things would be fine—until our delusions slapped the shit out of us.

Still, the feeling isn't unattainable. We live in the land where we can do anything in order to pursue our happiness, so long as it doesn't hurt, attempt to hurt, or plausibly could hurt anyone or anything else.

We live in the land of pursuit! We are free to pursue our dreams without pause. We live

freely, with restrictions only to protect the interests that are essential to make things civil and conducive to ingenuity.

Right?

Imagine now your happy hair stylist, doing what he loves, and telling his client that story about his boyfriend forgetting their anniversary. Think about the awkward coffee shop couple, John and David, wondering if they'd be so lucky. Envision your power-walkers, and their joyful conversation around the baby she adopted...*with her*.

Think about your speck of dust, which doesn't give a damn about who you're kissing on your sofa, lying blissfully in anticipation of another game of "*tag, you're it!*"

The pursuit they were promised, one that is unquestionably discerned from love—the pursuit of happiness—is under fire.

We live in an era where freedom is substantial enough a proposition that we overthrow world governments to give it to other people. Yet, here at home, we deny the Freedom to Love to millions of men and women who want happiness—for their families, for themselves, for their *spouses*.

Happiness knows your name. It doesn't matter if you're gay or straight, black or white, rich or poor. It's by your side, though sometimes just out of reach, waiting for you to find it—to play wonderfully; to hope endlessly; to love breathlessly.

Stand tall. Be heard. And love.

Just...love. ▣

To learn how you can contribute to keeping the pursuit alive for you, and your brothers and sisters, contact Project 515 at <[www.Project515.org](http://www.Project515.org)>, or OutFront Minnesota at <[www.OutFront.org](http://www.OutFront.org)>. Straight? We love you, too. Join us as an ally.





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